DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 155 142 SP 012 646

AUTHOR Alden, Elaine; And Others.
TITLE An Examination of the Sex Bias of Student Teachers.
PUB DATE [77]
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Discriminatory Attitudes (Social); Higher Education; *Sex Stereotypes; *Student Teachers; Surveys
IDENTIFIERS *Sex Bias

ABSTRACT

In an effort to determine the extent of sex bias and sex-role stereotyping in the attitudes and awareness of student teachers, a 50-item questionnaire was developed and tested. Five general areas of sex bias were investigated: (1) career and the world of work; (2) family and home management; (3) education; (4) sports and health; and (5) male/female relationships. One hundred thirty-nine Southern Illinois University (Carbondale) students enrolled in 1977 student teaching completed the questionnaire. Interpretation of responses indicated that male subjects' response patterns were more supportive of stereotyped sex roles than were females' responses and that secondary education teacher trainees exhibited greater sex stereotyping than elementary education teacher trainees. A third comparison, between the scores of whites and nonwhites, was inconclusive due to the small sample size for nonwhites (6 out of 139). (MJB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED155142

SP

Elaine Alden, Berniece Seiferth

Carol Jacko

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Elaine Alden

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND THE ERIC SYSTEM CONTRACTORS."

An Examination of the Sex Bias of Student Teachers

Purpose of the study

That sex-bias and sex-role stereotyping exists in society, most often to the detriment of women, is well documented. Recent legislation aims to eradicate the inequality and inequity women have endured. Materials and resources have been designed by feminist groups and state offices of education to help eliminate sexism as it is reflected in the educational setting.

Yet, of the many responsibilities mandated to the educational system in recent years, that of upholding non-sexist standards in the classroom is one of the most difficult. Curriculum, textbooks, and budget revisions may be made to

SP012 646

correct obvious inequalities, but unless the classroom teacher has developed nonsexist attitudes and awarenesses, chances of creating an atmosphere of equality and opportunity for both male and female students are limited.

Most student teachers, although filled with enthusiasm and idealism, have themselves been victims of the same socialization process they will be asked to change as classroom teachers.

Too often we assume that young adults have developed a nonsexist attitude simply because the issue has been open to inquiry for the last twelve years. This assumption is dangerous and naive. It denies the existence of deep-seated societal and cultural expectations for individuals based solely on gender. The purpose of this study is to examine systematically the attitudes and awarenesses of student teachers. Results of this examination, will aid teacher educators in identifying the training and skills most needed by future teachers in order to foster the elimination of sexism in the classroom.

Procedures

After a comprehensive examination of Buros Mental Measurements Yearbooks, Tests in Print, and relevant research, it was found that no instrument has been developed to examine attitudes toward sex-role stereotyping. Consequently, it was necessary to design such an instrument. Based on review of the literature, five general areas of

sex-bias were generated: 1) Career and the World of Work, 2) Family and Home Management, 3) Education, 4) Sports and Health, and 5) Male/Female Relationships. Ten items were developed for each topic, making a total of 50 items. The response options for each item were "A-Agree," "B-No Opinion," and "C-Disagree." Respondents were advised to mark their first or immediate reaction to each item and to try to limit their responses to "A-Agree" or "C-Disagree." Agreement with an item suggested sex-role bias; disagreement suggested a lack of sex-role bias. The University Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects found the questionnaire to be not-at-risk and its distribution was approved. The normal limitations of an initial study are such that the demographic factors of ethnic background and religion, both of which have emerged as strong determinants of attitude in currently proposed programs of human rights and equality, were not considered.

One hundred thirty-nine Southern Illinois University - Carbondale students who were enrolled in student teaching during the fall semester of 1977 completed the 50 item questionnaire. Participation was voluntary. Following seminars in the student teaching center during the latter part of the semester, student teachers completed the questionnaires anonymously.

Review of the Literature

Colvin has stated that sex role expectations permeate

our education institutions. Throughout most school systems, women are more likely to teach the very young while very few are seen in administrative posts. In 1975, 78 percent of elementary principalships were held by men, although men constituted only 12 percent of the elementary teaching force, according to Cirincione-Coles. In addition, men held more than 98.6 percent of high school principalships and 99.9 percent of the position of superintendent. Such a preponderance of male administrators is carried over into the colleges and universities of our educational system. For example, in one study of 188 major departments of sociology conducted by Rossi, it was found that women formed 30 percent of the doctoral candidates, 27 percent of the full time instructors, 14 percent of the assistant professors, 9 percent of the associate professors, 4 percent of the full professors and less than 1 percent of the department chairpersons.

But lest we think that education bears the largest share of sex bias against the advancement of women in the profession, a look at the achievement of women in the legal profession is in order. Beck reported that there never has been a woman on the U.S. Supreme Court. In addition, of 97 judgeships in federal courts of appeal, only two ever have been held by women, and only one is serving at the present time. Only three women hold active judgeships out of 399 posts in the U.S. district courts. Currently only 12 women serve among

932 judges in state appeals or supreme courts.

At the present time there does not appear to be much activity in colleges of education around the country to study sex stereotyping in an analytical manner in order to help persons eradicate many of the attitudes and beliefs they have acquired from their earliest home, school and societal environment. Many college students are unaware that sex bias is perpetuated by the schools through such means as textbooks that portray women in subservient, nurturing or passive roles only. Nor are they aware that teachers' expectations, based almost entirely upon roles that society traditionally has assigned the two sexes, are carried over unconsciously by each year's crop of new teachers. The damaging effects of early sexism in the schools places a life-long burden on school children, according to Lurth.

Home succinctly stated that consciously or unconsciously women often equate intellectual achievement with loss of femininity. A bright woman is well aware of societal standards for women, so, consequently, many are burdened with a sense of failure if they succeed - success in reaching their own goals but failure within society. Home conducted a study by administering the standard TAT achievement motivation measure to 90 girls and 88 boys, undergraduate students at the University of Michigan, Over 65 percent of the girls showed evidence of the motive to avoid success. Fewer than 10 percent of the boys showed this fear of success.

The researchers feel that most teachers want a better society for both men and women, young and old, regardless of sex, race, or creed. The question of whether the school should help shape society or merely reflect society has been debated for as long as there has been education. Certainly indoctrination has no part in a democratic society, but there are some inalienable rights to which every child, regardless of sex, is entitled. McCune and Mathews felt that placing limitations in regard to race, ethnic origin or social class affect the preparation of children for adult roles. And Lee went so far as to say that "sex role is a cultural invention" and it is no longer appropriate. He felt that there is considerable evidence available that points to likenesses rather than differences in boys and girls. Sex role casting does not account for human personality. Simmons reinforced Lee's assessment by stating that teachers need to plan a "balanced physical education program that is suitable for all children." Equal opportunities and expectancies should be provided for both boys and girls so they can both experience pride in accomplishment.

Sadker stated that teachers also reinforce and even intensify sex stereotyping by expressing greater approval of girls and disapproval of boys. However, the teachers give boys more attention in general in instruction and in listening. Consequently, the learning on the part of the girls may be wasted as they are reinforced for their "silence, neatness, and conformity."

Another area of well-documented discrimination in the schools has been the sports programs. "Women's Sports conducted an informal national survey and found that in high schools, boys' budgets on the average, were five times larger than girls; in college men used 30 times as much money." Some of these patterns of funding have changed with the passage of Title IX which provides equality of opportunities in athletics, "but it does not require equal expenditures."

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized: (1) that male student teachers would display more bias in the area of sex stereotyping than females; (2) that secondary student teachers would tend to hold more stereotyped opinions than elementary student teachers and (3) that non-whites would tend to reflect more attitudes of sexual stereotyping than whites.

The data were analyzed by the use of the t-test for the difference of mean scores. In order to facilitate analysis, the responses were converted to numerical values: A-Agree = 1, B-No Opinion = 2, and C-Disagree = 3.

Table 1. Comparison of scores of males and females

	males, n=43 females, n=90			
	mean	s.d.	d.f.	t-value
Subtest 1: Career and the world of work				
Males	5.98	2.27	131	4.33*
Females	7.57	1.82		
Subtest 2: Family and home management				
Males	6.35	2.55	131	3.88*
Females	8.03	2.23		
Subtest 3: Education				
Males	7.28	2.85	63.71	3.18*
Females	8.82	2.06		
Subtest 4: Sports and Health				
Males	6.33	2.33	131	3.13*
Females	7.61	2.16		
Subtest 5: Male and Female Relationship				
Males	6.88	2.60	1.31	3.35*
Females	8.28	2.06		
Total:				
Males	32.81	11.25	1.31	3.83*
Females	40.31	8.90		

* $p < .005$

Table 1 illustrates the results of the test of differences in mean scores on the various subtests and on the total. Males scored significantly higher on all subtests and the total test. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected

and it may be concluded that male subjects' response patterns were more supportive of stereotyped sex roles than were females' responses.

The second null hypothesis is as follows: There is no significant difference in the stereotype of sex roles by elementary and secondary teacher trainees.

Table 2: Comparison of scores of elementary and secondary teacher trainees

elementary, n=65
secondary, n=44

	mean	s.d.	d.f.	t-value
Subtest 1: Career and the world of work				
Elementary	7.72	1.21	55.51	3.25*
Secondary	6.34	2.64		
Subtest 2: Family and home management				
Elementary	8.14	1.85	67.12	3.02*
Secondary	6.66	2.87		
Subtest 3: Education				
Elementary	9.03	1.44	55.93	3.09*
Secondary	7.50	3.06		
Subtest 4: Sports and health				
Elementary	7.75	1.79	68.95	3.09*
Secondary	6.34	2.66		
Subtest 5: Male/Female Relationship				
Elementary	8.55	1.56	60.44	3.62*
Secondary	6.84	2.86		
Total:				
Elementary	41.20	5.85	55.04	3.61*
Secondary	33.68	12.93		

* $p < .005$

Table 2 illustrates the results of the test of differences in the mean scores. Secondary teacher trainees scored significantly higher than elementary teacher trainees on all subtests and the total test. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it may be concluded that secondary teacher trainees exhibit greater sex stereotypy than elementary teacher trainees.

Stated as the null, the third hypothesis is: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of whites and non-whites.

Table 3: Comparison of scores of whites and non-whites

whites, n=133
non-whites, n=6

	mean	s.d.	d.f.	t-value
Subtest 1: Career and the world of work				
white	7.10	2.08	137	.08
non-white	7.17	2.48		
Subtest 2: Family and home management				
white	7.58	2.40	137	1.06
non-white	6.50	3.02		
Subtest 3: Education				
white	8.38	2.35	137	.21
non-white	8.17	3.55		
Subtest 4: Sports and health				
white	7.20	2.29	137	.31
non-white	7.50	1.87		

	mean	s.d.	d.f.	t-value
Subtest 5: Male/Female Relationships				
white	7.92	2.27	137	.61
non-white	7.33	3.33		
Total:				
white	38.18	10.07	137	.36
non-white	36.67	13.17		

While the differences are not statistically significant, judgment should probably be suspended because of the small sample size for non-whites.

Conclusions:

Positive relationships were found to exist between sex-role stereotypy and (1) males and (2) secondary level teacher trainees. The study presents some basis for consideration of the elementary school as a more receptive locale in which to develop more openness toward diversity of sex-roles in careers, education, athletics, and in the home and family structure. It is in that setting that one may find the most flexibility and openness in the recipients and, as the study has demonstrated, fewer established biases.

Since the subtest indicating the greatest bias is to be found in the area of education for women, it may be most logical to develop curricular materials which address that area. Education is probably a key to other areas, and most certainly to that of career.

Need for Further Research

While the results of this study confirm the hypotheses that sex-role bias does exist, the extent and causal factors involved can be determined only through research. Replication of this study with a larger population and including such demographic data as ethnic background and religion could be most profitable and enlightening.

References

Leonard Kaplan, "Survival Talk for Educators-Sexism in Teacher Education," Journal of Teacher Education, Winter, 1975/Vol.XXVI, no. 4, p. 354-55.

Kathryn Cirincione-Coles, "The Administration: Male or Female?," Journal of Teacher Education, Winter, 1975/Vol. XXVI, no. 4, p. 326-28.

Nancy Frazier & Myra Sadker, Sexism in School and Society, Harper & Row, N.Y.: 1973.

Joan Beck, "Pregnancy Ruling May Goad Women in ERA Fight," Monitor, Jan, Feb, 1977, p. 6-7.

Sherry Lurth, "From a Parent's Perspective," Sexism in Education, The Emma Willard Task Force on Education, p. 20-23.

Pauline Gough & Ann C. Snell, "Middle Graders Focus on Sexism," Childhood Education, Jan. 1975, Vol. 5/no. 3, p. 128-31.

Shirley McCune and Martha Matthews, "Building Positive Futures: Toward a Nonsexist Education for All Children," Childhood Education, Feb. 1976/Vol. 52, no. 4, p. 178-86.

Patrick C. Lee, "Reinventing Sex Roles in the Early Childhood Setting," Childhood Education, Feb. 1976, Vol. 53, no. 4, p. 187-91.

Myra Sadker, "Sexism in Schools," Journal of Teacher Education, Winter 1975, Vol. XXVI, no. 4, p. 317-22.

Equal Rights Monitor: "What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in Sweat Socks?," March/April 1977.